

Wayne Allard

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SENATE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO HOLD HEARING ON ALLARD'S BILL TO ESTABLISH NEW VETERANS CEMETERY IN COLORADO SPRINGS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee is scheduled to hold a hearing Thursday on legislation introduced by U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) that would establish a national cemetery for veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Colorado Springs metro area. Senator Allard is scheduled to speak Thursday before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on behalf of the legislation.

In a letter to Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Larry Craig (R-Idaho) requesting that the committee consider his bill, Senator Allard wrote, "This legislation will allow the thousands of eligible Colorado Springs military personnel, both active duty and retired, to have a chance to find their final resting place in the city so many of them love."

Senator Allard's legislation would give authority to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to accept a parcel of land as a gift to the Department for the establishment of a national cemetery. The legislation directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the new cemetery after consultation with Colorado state officials, Colorado Springs local officials and the U.S. General Services Administration. To this end, the local governments around Colorado Springs as well as the local Veterans Service Organizations, have been working together to pursue a suitable location in the area that could be donated to the VA Department. Senator Ken Salazar (D-Colorado) has cosponsored the bill, and Colorado 5th District Congressman Joel Hefley (R-Colorado Springs) has introduced identical legislation in the House.

"More than 35,000 active duty and reserve military personnel make El Paso County their home. And an estimated 23,000 military retirees live the Fifth Congressional District. This represents one of the largest concentrations of veterans and military retirees in the entire country," Senator Allard said.

"Given their dedicated service, I feel it is only fitting that we create a national cemetery in southern Colorado," Senator Allard said. "The closest national cemetery is in Denver, almost a 70 mile-trip from Colorado Springs."

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